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MANUFACTURERS, ATTENTION!

No Canadian who observes the course of current political events in this country, can but be impressed with the startling importance that characterizes the crisis through which the Dominion Government is now passing. That Government acceded to power upon the one great question of the fiscal policy that was to influence the legislation of Canada—a policy that was formulated and put into operation by Sir John Macdonald in 1878. Since then many questions of varying interest have been presented for the consideration of our legislators, but until now none of them have so distracted the Government, and the party that placed it in power, as

that which now seems to overshadow all other questions. This incubus was not a live factor when the Government acceded to office, therefore it had no influence, and cut no figure in either the Dominion elections of 1891 or the formation of the Government consequent thereon. The great and only issue at that time was as to whether the National Policy should be continued, and this question was answered, as it had so often previously been, in most unmistakable terms. It is easily understood, therefore, that a question that was then dormant, but which has since quickened into a most unhappy and disastrous liveliness, should be viewed from different standpoints by different members of the Government, and of the party, and that these divergent views should lead to the impending crisis. This divergency of views is not confined to the dominant political party of the country, but exists with quite as much emphasis in the Reform party. If Conservatives are at variance on the question, so are the Reformers; but what is of the very greatest importance to the manufacturing, and all other industrial interests of Canada, is the possibility that before the agitation is quieted and the question settled and removed from the sphere of practical politics, the Government of Canada may pass from the hands of the Conservatives into the control of the Reformers.

We all know what that would mean, and therefore the great and vital interest manufacturers have in the question.

We all know that before the agitation that resulted in the establishment of the National Policy was begun, most of the manufacturers gave allegiance to the Reform party, and that if that party had properly considered the best interests of the country, and listened to the demands of the manufacturers for tariff protection for their respective industries—in other words, if the party had espoused that cause, there would not have been that defection from it that placed Sir John Macdonald in power. The National Policy was the sole and only issue upon which these manufacturers split from the Reform party, and, in the case of very many of them, the only issue that now holds them from it. To them and to the country at large, as has been demonstrated time and again, the National Policy is of more importance than anything and everything else. Other issues may be of importance—some of them are of great importance—but the National Policy is of vital importance, and those who infused life and activity into it will fight hard and long to preserve it. They will stand as a solid phalanx to protect and defend it, and all other political ties and affiliations will be hurled aside and trampled down now as they were in 1878 in its defense.

Sir John Macdonald frequently declared that without the adhesion and support of the manufacturers he could never have attained to power, and the same influence has been acknowledged time and again by Conservative statesmen both in and out of parliament. Then why should it be that at this time these statesmen should allow themselves to be drawn into a position where the outcome of it may result in a most grievous injury to the National Policy to which they have been so profuse in declaring their allegiance? Are their most sacred pledges to be set aside under any circumstances whatever? It is true that whenever they open their mouths it is to reiterate their unchanging devotion to the National Policy, but actions rather than words are most to be desired.

It is proper to enquire what would be the effect upon the manufacturers, if the Conservatives should retire from power,